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**DECLARATION OF CLAUDIA PILON**

I, Claudia Pilon, hereby declare:

1. I am a teacher at John C. Fremont Senior High School in Los Angeles, California. I have personal knowledge of the matters set forth in this declaration, and if called upon to do so, I could and would competently testify to the matters set forth herein.

2. The purpose of this declaration is to describe the conditions at Fremont High School, where I am in my fifth year as a teacher, and currently teach ninth and eleventh grade English on track "C." I am also the English department chairperson and a mentor teacher for other English teachers.

3. Fremont High School lacks basic educational materials, such as books, for its students. For example, I ordered various sets of novels for my classes in March of 2001 so that I could use these books this school year. Track C starts in July. I still did not have the books I ordered in March in my classroom at the end of August 2001, almost two months after the school year started and five months after I placed my order. Not having the books I ordered and expected to use this year makes it very hard for me to plan my lessons for my students. Aside from my situation, I am aware that as of August, 2001, the reading literacy program at Fremont does not have the materials it needs. This is a program that caters to high school students who are performing at a third grade level. The teachers who teach these students do not have textbooks for their students. Teacher, Amy Lee, does not even have a teacher's edition of the textbook for this class, nor does she have textbooks for her students. Amy must borrow other teachers' books and make copies for herself and her students. Her students, just like all students, need and deserve to have a book to use during class and to take home for homework.

4. There are other instructional materials lacking at Fremont. As English Department chairperson, I have been asked by teachers Bill McCleary,

1 Mario Becerra and Shirleen Armstrong the status of "Accelerated Reader", a  
2 software program where kids read books at their own level and then progress to  
3 the next level of text as they master different skills. Fremont has the software,  
4 but it has not yet been installed. I have written to the Title I coordinator, but  
5 have not gotten any response about when this program will actually be installed  
6 and available to our students. It is a shame that we have this instructional tool,  
7 but that it cannot be used because it has not yet been installed.

8 5. Not only is there a lack of textbooks, but there is generally a lack  
9 of school supplies that teachers need in order to teach and provide an adequate  
10 educational environment. Last year I spent around \$2,200.00 on supplies for  
11 my classroom and my students, and I still have the receipts for about \$800.00  
12 of the money I spent. This year I will probably spend approximately the same  
13 amount of money. I have purchased supplies such as display boards, art  
14 supplies, overhead markers, construction paper, reading books, magazines and  
15 newspapers for my classroom and students. I constantly go to garage sales so  
16 that I can purchase reading materials for my students. My students need  
17 reading materials so that they can improve their reading fluency. I cannot wait  
18 months on end to receive books that I have ordered or an overhead marker so  
19 that I can give a lesson to my classes. Unfortunately, when I have placed  
20 orders for certain supplies, I am forced to wait an unreasonable amount of time  
21 for the supplies to make their way to me. The turnaround time is so long, that I  
22 have found it necessary to buy the things that I need for my students.

23 6. Overcrowding is a severe problem at Fremont High School. The  
24 school is operated on a year-round, three-track schedule, where two "tracks" of  
25 students and teachers attend school at once, while a third track is off session.  
26 Even though Fremont runs year-round in an attempt to accommodate all the  
27 students who attend the school, overcrowding still makes it very difficult for  
28 the teachers to teach and the students to learn. Because I am the English

1 department chairperson, various teachers have come to me to complain about  
2 this issue. Amy Lee, Laura Carpenter, and Bill McCleary have all complained  
3 that their classes are overcrowded. Many of the tenth grade English classes at  
4 Fremont are overcrowded because there is a high cap on the number of students  
5 that can be placed in each class. Overcrowded classrooms are bad for the  
6 students and bad for teacher morale. For the students, it is almost impossible  
7 to receive individualized instruction. For the teachers, workloads become  
8 unmanageable as class sizes increase, and it becomes very difficult to get to  
9 know the students and to meet their individual needs. Last year, I had a teacher  
10 come into my classroom crying because she was so disturbed by the  
11 unmanageability of her class size.

12 7. For several weeks this semester I did not have enough desks in my  
13 classroom. I had forty ninth graders in my homeroom period, some of whom  
14 were forced to sit on a sofa I have in my classroom or on chairs without desks.  
15 We are supposed to do test preparation during homeroom and students receive  
16 academic credit for that class; it is not "busy work" time and the students  
17 should have desks and chairs.

18 8. Overcrowding is not only obvious in the classrooms: During  
19 passing periods, the hallways are so crowded that it is very difficult to walk  
20 through the halls without bumping into students. Students are constantly  
21 elbowing their way through the halls to get to their classrooms. I have seen  
22 fights erupt because students bump into one another. One student cracked her  
23 head on the ground during a fight that erupted during a passing period. The  
24 number of people crammed into the hallways is really oppressive and unsafe for  
25 the students at Fremont.

26 9. At the beginning of this school year there was a ninth grade  
27 assembly in the auditorium. I took one of my ninth grade classes. The entire  
28 auditorium was filled with just two tracks of ninth graders. During this

1 assembly, I realized the school always has to split up the assemblies because  
2 Fremont was not built to accommodate so many students, and only a portion of  
3 the student body can fit into the auditorium at any given time.

4 10. The student bathrooms at Fremont are disgusting. I have been in  
5 the girl's bathrooms twice this year and both times I noticed there were no  
6 paper towels or toilet paper. I also noticed water on the floor. Aside from  
7 what I saw, many students have spoken to me about the disgusting conditions in  
8 the bathrooms and told me that they will not even use the school facilities  
9 because they are so filthy. Students should not be forced to go without  
10 relieving themselves because the bathrooms are simply too dirty to use.

11 11. Aside from the visible filth in the students' restrooms, there is a  
12 problem with vermin at Fremont. Last school year, I was in the testing  
13 coordinator's storage room with another teacher, Jill Sargent, and we saw mice  
14 in that room. This year I have seen roaches and mice in my classroom. I have  
15 seen cockroaches at least three to four times this school year. The students in  
16 my classroom have also seen them and they think it is really disgusting. Not  
17 only is it disgusting, it usually disrupts the entire class whenever there is a  
18 roach spotting. On August 24, 2001, a student, Susanna Sandoval, came into  
19 class saying, "Ms. Pilon, I saw a big rat in Mr. Richardson's class today."

20 12. The feeling at Fremont is that Fremont is a throwaway school and a  
21 dumping ground. The lack of supplies, overcrowded campus and classrooms  
22 and filthy facilities send the wrong message to our students. Morale at Fremont  
23 suffers because of these conditions.

24 I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct,  
25 and that this declaration was signed on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2001, in Los  
26 Angeles, California.

27   
28 CLAUDIA PILON